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## Introduction

This document examines five examples of creative professional development opportunities between schools and artists. Our motivation in initiating this process was to encourage Creative Partnerships London East schools to explore practical ways in which continuing professional development for teachers could focus on creativity. It is our aspiration that this paper contributes to a broader discussion on professional development opportunities for teachers around creative learning.

We have encouraged the 25 schools we are currently working with to commission an individual or organisation from the creative sector to devise and deliver a half or whole day continuing professional development opportunity, or INSET, for school staff teams. It is our intention that this will serve as a catalyst for encouraging whole school thinking about practice and reform.

The process began at a planning residential weekend in March 2003, facilitated by Kate Kelly for all 25 London East School Coordinators.

Kate's paper describes how five Creative Partnerships London East schools (three Primary and two Secondary) have chosen to integrate creativity and creative ways of working into professional development opportunities for their staff and support teams. Her report raises questions around the value of creativity focussed INSET and how this is delivered, exploring the impact and benefit of such sessions.

For Creative Partnerships London East to have any sustainable impact on teaching and learning it is essential that we build upon ways in which teachers can share thinking around the concept of creativity, experience something new as a staff team, communicate across departments and specialisms, and recognise the benefits of adult play and learning.

If we are encouraging children to build on one another's ideas, explore complexity, and engage with new and imaginative ways of working collectively and individually, we need to develop creative learning environments where teachers can also experience this and their creativity is valued.

**Steve Moffitt**

Director

Creative Partnerships London East

**What is Creative INSET and why do it?**

To ensure that Creative Partnerships has a long term impact on teaching and that learning and the Creative Partnerships ethos is embedded in school policy, staff must have an understanding of and investment in the programme. It is important that all staff are informed about the aims and plans in their school so that the benefits of projects are maximised. INSET provides an opportunity for the whole staff team to work with a creative partner or identified creative practitioner:

To gain new skills and focus on key issues and areas of development identified in School Improvement Plans

To develop leadership, teamwork and cross curricular work

To give staff space for innovation, risk taking and reflection on practice

This in turn will inform school priorities in identifying future projects. Staff feedback and evaluation is an essential tool in the planning process.

Individual staff development is central to the London East programme of creative practice in education. The London East team work with each school to devise and commission a creative partner to deliver one half day or a whole day staff professional development event per year. Funding is available to cover costs such as training fees and associated resources, over and above the project budgets.

**What are the possibilities of Creative INSET?**

Each school designs and plans their own professional development programme. Some choose to work with a creative partner already engaged with a project in the school. Others identify a specific focus and the London East team act as broker in locating an appropriate practitioner or organisation to both co-plan and deliver the training. A wide variety of approaches are taken.

Examples include:

Skills sharing, skills acquisition and development

Introduction to the whole school regarding the aims and purpose of creative projects

Exploration of cross department and cross curricular work through creative activities

A specific focus on an area of school improvement or priority, such as boys' underachievement, and how to address this through the arts

An identified theme or topic, such as writing skills, delivered through a creative programme

Exploration of preferred learning styles (which a number of London East schools are currently researching)

Development of a whole school creative learning policy and strategy



EastSide Educational Trust run a poetry session at New City Primary School



D fie foe lead an animation workshop at Columbia Primary School

As a specialist Media Arts College the focus was to build on and develop existing expertise and maximise opportunities for integrating media into all subject areas and departments.



## Case Study 1: Stoke Newington School

Stoke Newington School (Media Arts specialist status) is a mixed comprehensive for eleven to sixteen year olds in Hackney. There are 1202 students, with over fifty per cent from ethnic minority backgrounds. Over seventeen languages are spoken at the school, with a high percentage of students for whom English is an additional language. The school serves a diverse range of communities and students come from a wide spectrum of economic circumstances, culture and educational success. (Ofsted report April 2004)

Helen Wood, Media Arts Coordinator and Creative Partnerships Coordinator planned a whole staff INSET day to take place at the beginning of the Autumn term 2003. Three creative partners and a number of individual ICT tutors and technicians delivered an ambitious project that involved all staff, including premises managers and support staff.

### The aims of the day were:

To build confidence in the staff to use, understand and employ the power of media technologies and gain practical skills

To provide experience applicable to incorporating media into classroom teaching, especially for non-arts departments

To create an opportunity for staff to work in groups and produce a tangible outcome at the end of the day, supporting collaborative work between teaching and non-teaching staff

The creative partners selected were Red Cow Creative, Highwire and YCTV with five additional media tutors. The day was carefully planned with staff selecting workshops of choice beforehand. These covered TV studio, camera and editing skills, planning a film project, Photoshop, Flash animation and Word for design. One department, English and Media, elected for specific training to support the delivery of GCSE media, but mostly staff were in mixed groups.

The day commenced as everyone gathered in the school theatre for an introduction to Creative Partnerships London East and the day's activities, and ended with a plenary. Some workshops carried on all day whilst others were morning only with the afternoon set aside for department planning.

There were some organisational hurdles – it was the first day of term with some building works incomplete and not all of the technical equipment up and running – but the majority of staff were able to fully participate.

As a specialist Media Arts College the focus was to build on and develop existing expertise and maximise opportunities for integrating media into all subject areas and departments. Helen had planned the day well, ensuring that all creative partners were well briefed, and coordinating the timetable. Evaluation feedback from staff and tutors at the plenary was enhanced by presentations from the workshop groups, which included a short video film. These proved popular and enjoyable and enabled participants to share experiences and discuss outcomes.

### Staff reported that they:

Felt better equipped to implement their learning in the classroom and apply to their subject area

Were better able to support students in their class work and coursework

Had gained new skills or increased skills in a chosen area

Could identify areas where they needed to undertake more training

### Additional outcomes included:

Building links with creative partners with whom they might be able to work in the future

Specialist media staff and technicians became aware of the huge range of ability that exists within the school and as a result are better able to devise training to support the different levels of need

Cross department and cross curricular links were developed for future collaboration

**"The most enjoyable INSET day I've been to at this school."**

**"It will help me think creatively about integrating film projects into the Humanities curriculum."**

**"We need to do more whole school training like this."**



**Case Study 2:**  
**New City Primary School**

New City Primary School is situated in the heart of Plaistow, Newham. The school experiences high pupil mobility throughout the year. There are 544 pupils, with around three quarters from ethnic minority backgrounds. A high proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language, and 23 per cent of these are at an early stage of learning English. (Ofsted report June 2003)

The Headteacher and Creative Partnerships Coordinator Jackie Withnall planned a day INSET at the end of the first half of the Autumn term 2003 for all staff including Learning Support Assistants (LSAs). The day was planned in collaboration with the chosen creative partner, Eastside Educational Trust, who have experience of arts education through provision of drama, poetry and performance projects. An initial planning meeting identified the aims and content of the day and Eastside identified an appropriate artist. The artist selected was Joelle Taylor, a performance poet and SLAM poetry champion. Prior to the day Eastside distributed a questionnaire to staff to gain input to the planning but little was revealed as to the format and content apart from 'taking part in a creative drama session'.

**The aims of the INSET were:**

- To provide staff with innovative strategies to enhance creative writing skills
- To provide a practical performance poetry workshop as a way of engaging, improving and developing literacy skills with pupils
- To work with a professional artist
- To provide the staff team of 50 with the opportunity to 'release their imagination' and make creative explorations
- To incorporate creative strategies for working with boys and EAL students

**The objective of the day was to provide a performance poet who would present a creative interactive session that would:**

- Develop, and perhaps alter, their understanding of poetry
- Enhance participants own skills in writing poetry
- Boost creative expression skills in order to pass on to their students
- Recognise poetry as a tool to explore literacy across the curriculum

The day was organised in two halves. The poetry component was run with half of the staff whilst the other group participated in a music session led by the school music teacher. The groups swapped over after lunch and at the end of the day came together to share their work. Joelle introduced the poetry session with practical exercises and demonstrated techniques, which involved the group in creating a collaborative piece called 'The box beneath my bed'.

This was placed in the context of whole class activity, and followed by a brainstorm from one of Joelle's own poems 'Ropey Joe' about a monster/mythical creature and finally a Rap exercise to produce a 'beat box'.

The sharing at the end was taken seriously with small groups performing Rap pieces, some in found costume with 'beat' music using a variety of instruments. This proved very successful and there was much discussion about how to incorporate elements into the forthcoming Christmas show.

Eastside had prepared a pre INSET questionnaire, including questions such as 'What does creativity mean to you?' 'How do you personally feel about poetry?' and 'What do you hope to learn from the INSET?' which was followed up after the day with an evaluation.

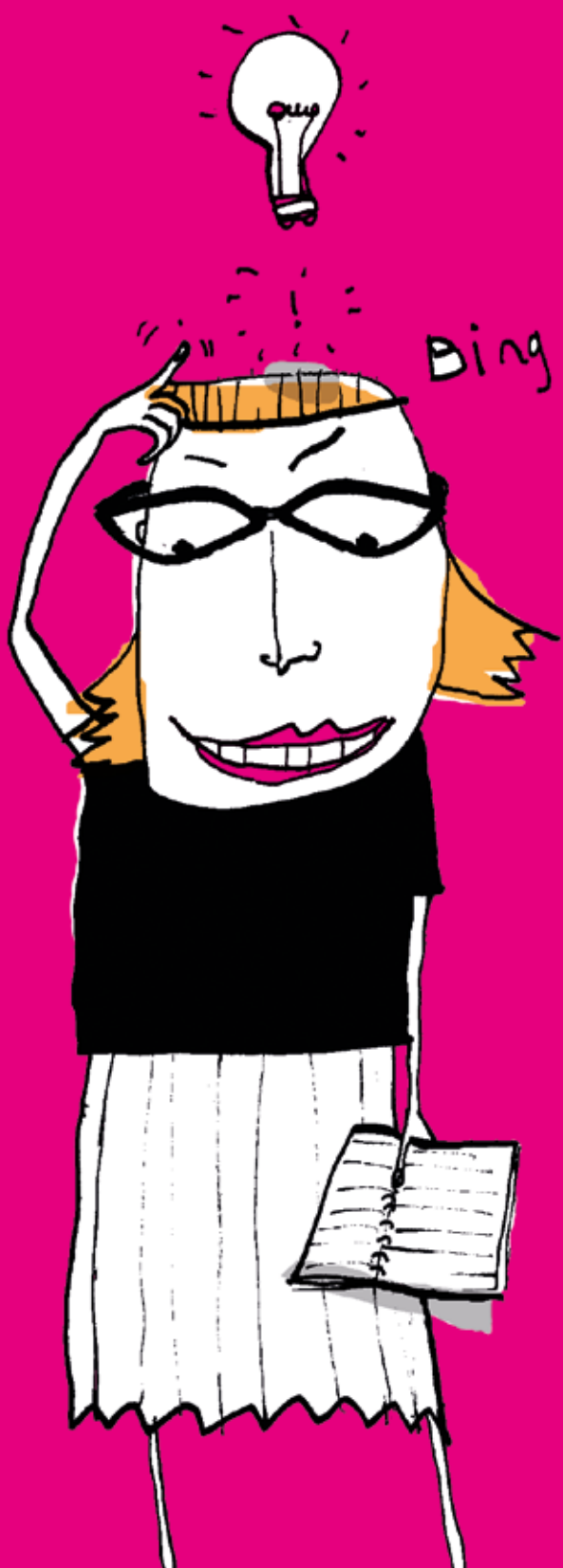
**What skills have you learnt as a result of the INSET?**

- "To try new ideas and existing songs in a different style."
- "Using poetry to reinforce children's ideas."
- Has this INSET altered your view/opinion of poetry?**
- "It has inspired me to use poetry more in different ways."
- "Using your imagination, no restrictions, expressing yourself."
- "Learning through having fun with colleagues."
- "Slaming! I work with SEN pupils, mainly boys. They will love this."

It proved to be a very motivating experience high on staff enjoyment and learning outcomes, such as skills, techniques and ideas with speaking and listening, literacy and creative writing activities through poetry related to work in the classroom. Eastside worked in real collaboration with the school to plan and deliver an excellent creative training experience. It was accessible to all staff with a balance of personal risk taking and trying out ideas in groups, sharing learning and providing a vehicle for practical application of ideas and techniques.



The aim was for staff to create a piece of work, collectively exploring ways in which they could work across the curriculum and to 'be children and play with ideas'.



### Case Study 3: Central Foundation Girls' School

Central Foundation Girls' School (Performing Arts specialist status) is a multicultural comprehensive situated in Tower Hamlets. With 1415 students aged eleven to eighteen, the school serves an area of high economic deprivation. A high proportion of students speak English as an additional language, with 10 per cent in the early stages of learning English. (Ofsted report September 2000)

Jim Valentine, Head of Art and Creative Partnerships Coordinator, chose to focus on an INSET 'experience for the whole school' handing the planning over to creative partners suggested by the London East team. Three practitioners, Clare Whistler (director/choreographer), Pete Letanka (musician) and Andrea Carr (visual/environmental artist) worked together to deliver an afternoon session for the whole staff, called 'Grow', which took place at the beginning of the Spring term 2004.

#### The aims of the INSET were:

For staff to create a piece of work, collectively exploring ways in which they could work across the curriculum

To 'be children and play with ideas'

This was a high-risk strategy, which assumed that all staff would participate in an unknown but directed plan. Clare introduced the afternoon, but kept staff in the dark, with an element of secrecy about what was planned. Staff were asked to trust the process, be inventive, use their imagination and play with ideas.

The group was quickly divided into three, working with one of the artists on a 'piece' for an hour. The group with Clare explored physical movement games and exercises, whilst the group with Pete did musical warm ups and rhythm exercises working towards a vocal composition. The third group worked in the hall with Andrea where gardening materials such as soil, bamboo, netting, plant pots and plastic sheeting had been placed, and were given a brief to build a fantasy garden working in small teams. Various themes developed, with one group hanging materials from the balcony to create a focus on the differences and conflict between nature and nurture. Others created waterfalls, pathways and a walled garden.

The afternoon culminated in a final performance piece with all groups gathering together in the hall to interact and share. The singers and movement group were asked to question the 'gardeners' about their constructions and what they represented. The musicians went onto the balcony whilst Pete played the piano and the physical group moved around the gardens breaking down the gardens then rebuilding. Everyone was given a bulb and a pot to plant it in with an intent, written on a stick label. This was to be a statement about growing something new for the coming year either personally or in school. Finally the singers performed their composition, a song about moving on, working together and success, with everyone joining in the chorus.

For most of the staff the workshop had been a success, with all but a few throwing themselves into the experience. The few dissenters, mostly male teachers, were reluctant to fully engage and didn't participate in the final bulb planting. However, the experiment had worked, and although there had been a clear feeling of bemusement, there was a stronger feeling of amusement and fun.

The objectives of enabling staff to work with different colleagues to embrace different approaches and experience different learning styles were achieved. Just how much this will influence future teaching methodology will depend on opportunities for future collaboration but immediate feedback from staff implied many possibilities. The INSET has led to planning a more creative curriculum, especially vocational studies at KS4, and some staff planning to follow up with cross curricular projects.

"I loved the fact I was given total freedom – knowing the school wanted me to do something unexpected was a gift. It was huge to know I was allowed to do that. I knew I wanted to make a piece. I always want to make something that interests me – and something I haven't done before."  
Clare Whistler

"The INSET had an amazing 'feel good' factor."

"Staff are keen to continue/start working in a cross curricular way."

## Case Study 4: Columbia Primary School

Columbia Primary School in Tower Hamlets has 426 pupils, aged three to eleven. Just under three quarters of the pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds, mainly Bangladeshi, but with small numbers of African, African Caribbean and Pakistani heritage. About three quarters of pupils have English as an additional language, around a fifth being at an early stage of learning English. (Ofsted report June 2002)

Phillipa Jordan, KS1 Teacher and Creative Partnerships Coordinator planned the whole staff INSET day, with their creative partner D fie foe, who were to embark on a Spring term animation project with the whole school. The session took place in January 2004 and aimed to introduce all the staff, including LSA's, to basic animation techniques and poetry skills to develop animated poems. The focus was to enable staff to better understand how moving image education fits into many areas of the curriculum, lends itself to different learning styles, is interactive and is especially good for work with children who have English as an additional language. The writer, broadcaster and poet Michael Rosen introduced the day and led the poetry workshop.

All the staff gathered for a morning introductory session with Michael leading a poetry animation game using a word and image association as a warm up.

Jonathan Charles and Simone Bloomfield from D fie foe introduced the animation process and described the forthcoming terms' project – 'splash!@columbia'.

The group was split into two, with Group A working with Michael in the morning to create a piece of poetry, which they would 'illustrate' in the afternoon. Group B worked with Jonathan and Simone in the morning on simple animation pieces, and spent the afternoon devising poetry responses to these. Both groups came together at the end of the afternoon to view the work and make a live recording of the poetry pieces over the animation visuals.

The day built a real enthusiasm and awareness about the power and application of poetry and animation and provoked discussion about the potential for employing animation techniques in the classroom. New skills were learnt and shared combining different approaches to poetry, word and image and how to animate an idea or simple story. The practical nature of the workshops also provided group debate as to how to develop the exercises and techniques in the classroom and application to the curriculum. It was an excellent introduction to the project and how D fie foe would be working with the children.

Staff feedback after the day included statements such as:

"I loved presenting our work at the end of the day."

"Completely new techniques for me – sharing ideas and learning new things fast."

"Everyone was involved with no restrictions."

"Inspiring. Many ideas generated. Looking forward to getting the children involved – they will love it."

The INSET took an innovative approach and was valuable in breaking down any pre existing assumptions and fears about these art forms. It offered skills and techniques for teaching practice in the future and involved all the support staff in a collaborative methodology. D fie foe recorded the final sharing of work. The staff felt so enthusiastic about the result that they planned to show it to pupils and parents at the launch of the 'splash!@columbia' project CD Rom celebration day at the end of the term. The school are considering setting up a digital animation resource to continue this activity.

"The INSET took place at the beginning of project launch week as an opportunity to meet all staff and to give everybody a taste of what was creatively possible during the project. This worked successfully and carried through the three month span of the project with wonderful results from pupils and teachers alike."

Simone Bloomfield, D fie foe

"I loved presenting our work at the end of the day."





Teachers and support staff worked collaboratively and clearly enjoyed having the time and space to work together and explore ideas through activity and discussion.



## Case Study 5: Robert Blair Primary School

Robert Blair Primary School is situated in the middle of an area of light industry in Islington. There are approximately 300 pupils aged three to eleven. A significant proportion of pupils start school with low levels of English, and a high number come from ethnic minority groups and speak English as an additional language. Pupils at the school speak twenty nine different languages. (Ofsted report November 2002)

Robert Blair has been joined by Headteacher Mark Miller midway through the Creative Partnerships programme. A number of projects had already taken place, organised by Maggie Hammill the Creative Partnerships Coordinator, however Mark identified the need to focus on policy and embedding practice throughout the school. Planning an INSET day provided an opportunity to start the process of developing a creative learning strategy.

### Aims of the INSET included:

Staff participation and development of ideas and concepts within key art forms – text, music and visual arts, from the perspective of the learner

To evaluate work and explore definitions of creativity and the potential of staff as creative leaders.

To enable staff to have an input into the creative vision for the school, which would evolve into a policy framework

The London East team identified three practitioners to lead the whole school INSET day at the end of the Spring term 2004. Deb Khan (Theatre Director and Education Consultant), Brendan O'Connor (Designer) and John Browne (Composer) started the day with drama warm up games, music exercises and a discussion about the place of creativity in the curriculum. This was placed in the context of the primary strategy 'Excellence and Enjoyment' and the values of exploration, invention and innovation.

Staff had no idea about the content and shape of the day but entered into the practical activities in groups and shared their endeavours. Brendan set up a visual exploration using found materials to build installations with themes, which had a story. This linked into 'tableaus' and groups were asked to describe and interpret the meaning and depiction of pieces. The session focussed on story making, sound and music making and visual constructions related to different learning styles.

"We deconstructed the creative process and applied this in the three different disciplines, text, design and composition. Using story as a vehicle the teachers practically explored this process and we constantly referred to cross curricular opportunities throughout the day. The work related to the schools physical environment and geographical location, with reference to Holloway prison, the railway and Kings Cross development and the canal. I was really pleased with the outcome. I wanted it to be rigorous, challenging and encourage a more conceptual way of thinking about creativity in school."

Deb Khan

Teachers and support staff worked collaboratively and clearly enjoyed having the time and space to work together and explore ideas through activity and discussion. The pace was fast and everyone was engaged with the process.

"It was a great day. It got us really thinking. Some of the staff said it was the best INSET they had ever experienced. The whole day was practical. Since the day our thinking has moved forward as a school, coupled with many of the discussions and other INSETs we have initiated over the last academic year. We now have a draft creative learning strategy, which we aim to implement from the Autumn term. Being creative, teaching creatively and exploring children's learning styles is a central theme in our School Improvement Plan over the next 3 years."

Mark Miller, Headteacher



This paper highlights five examples of creative professional development opportunities for teachers and school support staff. During the 2003-2004 academic year eighteen Creative Partnerships London East schools commissioned over forty individual artists and organisations to deliver a programme of half, whole day and after school sessions. These five case studies, although all different, reveal several common themes:

The value for staff of making time for a creative professional development session when time is precious

Professional skill development and learning new skills and techniques with specialists and professional arts practitioners

Cross curricular and team working

Sharing ideas and focus on different learning styles

If continuing professional development for teaching and school support staff is to be more focussed on encouraging a more creative approach to teaching and learning, what elements make a successful Creative INSET?

Planning – identifying the theme and content in relation to school priorities

Commissioning – identifying an appropriate creative partner

Preparing – undertaking a pre INSET audit of staff skills, gaps and attitudes to creative learning

Focussing – on specific outcomes, e.g. the development of a creative teaching and learning policy

The outcomes of such professional development opportunities will be demonstrated as each school further explores its engagement with creative learning and partnership practice with the creative sector. Having attended the five sessions documented in this paper, Kate Kelly made the following observations:

Teachers and support staff reported an increase in confidence, skills, ability to take risks and develop new approaches to teaching and learning through the arts and creative process

In some cases there was a profound effect on staff collaboration – working together and understanding of the process, application and value of creative education

Staff enjoyed and benefited from being learners in a situation, which encouraged them to think 'out of the box' and beyond the straightjacket of the National Curriculum, and prescribed schemes of work

The process of planning and realising such a session inevitably raises questions in each school about the kind of INSET or professional development opportunities staff feel are relevant and useful. The feedback and response of the schools Kate Kelly has documented in this paper is incredibly positive. We feel her paper demonstrates the value of commissioning a creative partner to deliver such a session for teaching and support staff.

Twenty two Creative Partnerships London East schools have chosen to commission creative partners to deliver INSET sessions during 2004/5.

School	INSET focus	Partner
Bow School	Preferred Learning Styles – residential for the Senior Management Team as part of research focus	Paul Howard
Central Foundation Girls' School	Exploring creativity and developing practical skills to facilitate cross curricular learning	Clare Whistler, Andrea Carr, Pete Letanka
Columbia Primary School	Linked to splash!@columbia project – developing poetry writing and animation skills	D fie foe Michael Rosen
Daniel House PRU	Linked to Beneath the Hood project – developing skills & material for their film project	Eelyn Lee
Gallions Primary School	Creativity, the arts and the way forward for teaching staff at the school	Helen Knowles, Arts Consultant
Haggerston Girls' School	Creative Partnerships – whole school approach	Steve Moffitt
Islington Arts and Media School	Preferred Learning Styles – partners deliver skills sessions as project introduction	Almeida Theatre, Guildhall School of Music and Drama, Jago Brown, IRIE! Dance Theatre, YCTV
Jubilee Primary School	Developing skills and materials linked to The World Was All Before Them Opera project	HMDT
Lauriston Primary School	Creative literacy	Centre for Literacy in Primary Education
Manor & Star Primary Schools	Puppet making skills development – linked to project	Little Angel Theatre
Monega Primary School	Skills development sessions linked to Creative Climbing	Emergency Exit Arts
New City Primary School	Using drama and poetry to improve literacy	Eastside Educational Trust
Newington Green Primary School	Introduction for staff to a creative enquiry curriculum	Ian Gilbert – Independent Thinking Ltd & Karin Muris – Dialoguesworks
Robert Blair Primary School	Developing a creative learning strategy	Deb Khan, with Brendan O'Connor and John Browne
Shapla Primary School	Emotional literacy	Cath Corrie
Stoke Newington School	Range of skills workshops to support and build staff confidence to use and understand the power of media technologies and their role at Stoke Newington School	Red Cow Creative Highwire YCTV
Stormont House School	Developing a creative approach to teaching and learning	Ollie Croke, Assaf Seewi, Paul Howard
Thomas Buxton Junior School	Developing practical singing and drama skills	Derek Gale and Gina Dry



Grow at Central Foundation Girls' School

## Creative Partnerships

Creative Partnerships works to give school children throughout England the opportunity to develop their potential, ambition, creativity and imagination. It achieves this by building sustainable partnerships between schools and creative and cultural organisations and individuals that impact upon learning. Creative Partnerships is funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, is supported by the Department for Education and Skills and is managed by Arts Council England.

Creative Partnerships London East aims to place creativity and imagination at the centre of teaching and learning, working across the whole school and curriculum. We work with young people, teachers, support staff, headteachers, parents and creative and cultural individuals and organisations to encourage and enable different ways of thinking about school.

We work with twenty five schools in Hackney, Islington, Newham and Tower Hamlets. Led by a core team of four, our programme is delivered through nine strands of activity: Projects in school, INSET, School Coordinators programme, Mentoring, Platform Presentations, Youth Forum, Entitlement, Preferred Learning Styles and professional development for the Creative and Cultural sector.

**Creative Inset was written by  
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Plus Manager, August 2004**

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